

QUESTION RE TERM "SON OF MAN"
by Willis E. Bishop

That term is found rather frequently to refer to a human being. But in reading "the" son of man, with the definite article, it refers to Christ. Used of Ezekiel about 90 times, and also used of Daniel, then in the Gospels it is used about 80 times as "the" Son of man, which refers to Christ's humanity. There is one exception: John 5: 25ff:

Most assuredly I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and the ones who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him [that is, the Son, or Jesus Christ] authority to execute judgment also because He is [and it should read] a Son of man.

Not "the," but "a." Many Bibles have "the," but that is not in the Greek.

The reason for that is, here Christ is going to act as the judge. He is going to judge everybody. The Father is not going to judge us, and the Holy Spirit is not going to judge us, but Christ is going to judge us because He is a human being. No one will ever be able to stand before the judgment bar of God and say, "You don't understand what it is to be a human being." Christ can say, "I lived for 33 years as a human being." Therefore, we have the assurance that Christ's judgment will be fair. He is a sympathetic, understanding High Priest, and He is a son of man. That is the only place in the Gospels I know which refers to Christ as "a Son of man" - John 5:27. It is usually "the Son of man."

For example, the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20:11:

And I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away for there was found no place for them, and I saw the dead small and great standing before God, and the scrolls were opened.

"Him who sat" on that judgment seat is Christ, according to John 5: 27, because "all judgment is given to the Son." That will be true also of the believers' judgment in II Corinthians. Believers will stand before Christ for judgment. As a human being, He will be a fair judge.

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